etc. These vacancies are to be filled through promotion of eligible officers and deputation where provided under the rules.

(d) and (e) Government have taken a number of measures to reduce the pendency and the waiting time for issue of passports in various Passport Offices. These steps *inter alia* include stabilisation of the supply of passport booklets; introduction of a productivity linked incentive scheme; creation of 400 additional posts; etc. Deputation to the Central Passport Organisation is governed by the rules of the Organisation.

Statement

Sl. No.	Post	Sanctioned Strength			Occupancy			Vacancy		
		Promotion Quota	Deputation quota	Total	Promotion Quota	Deputation quota	Total	Promotion Quota	Deputation quota	Total
1.	Passport Officer	8	8	16	1	7	8	7	1	8
2.	Assistant Passport Officer	15	10	25	1	5	6	14	5	19
3.	Public Relations Officer	48	—	48	18	1	19	30	+1	29
4.	Superintendent	61	—	61	74	1	75	+13	+1	+14

Hiring of Publicity Firm in USA to Handle Indian Mission's Public Relation

2797. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to hire a publicity firm in USA to handle the Indian Mission's public relations;

(b) if so, what is the decision, if any, taken by the Government in this regard;

(c) what are the functions of the publicity firm defined by the Government;

(d) what are the conditions, if any, laid down by Government under which the publicity firm is supposed to function; and

(e) what is the monthly expenditure involved in foreign exchange?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DINESH SINGH): (a) Government propose to hire a legal firm.

(b) The final decision in this regard will depend on the outcome of negotiations with the several firms which have been shortlisted.

(c) The functions of the firm will include provision of legal assistance to our Mission and Posts in the USA and facilitation in projecting India's viewpoint on a wide range of issues.

(d) and (e) Detailed terms and conditions including those relating to expenditure, are currently under negotiation.

Restriction on Unmarried Persons for Entry into Britain, U. S. and Canada

2798. SHRI BHADRESWAR GOHAIN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Government of Great Britain, U. S. and Canada have issued instructions to their diplomatic missions abroad not to issue any entry permit to any unmarried individuals into their countries;

(b) whether genuine students and scholars are likely to be affected by this decision of these countries; and

(c) what steps are proposed to be taken by the Government of India in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DINESH SINGH): (a) Government are not aware of any internal instructions issued by the Governments of U. K, U. S. A. and Canada to their Missions in India to this effect.

(b) While there has been tightening of